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**ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR CERTIFICATION**

Each county is required to have at least two certified election administrators on staff.

- For initial certification, an applicant must:
  - Have two years of service in elections during the three year period prior to request for certification
  - Complete the mandatory Elections 101 course
  - Pass a written examination
  - Complete 40 hours of additional education; 30 hours must be election-specific. Four hours may be obtained by visiting other county elections departments
  - Have a high school diploma or equivalent
  - Submit an application for initial certification
- For maintaining certification, an administrator must:
  - Serve as an election administrator continuously during the year for which maintenance is required
  - Receive 18 hours of continuing education; 6 hours must be election-specific

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### What do we mean by "elections specific" training?

Election specific means election relevant and sponsored by one of five approved organizations listed under "Training Opportunities."

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#### CERTIFIED ASSISTANT ELECTION ADMINISTRATOR

- For initial certification, an applicant must:
  - Have one year of service in elections immediately prior to the request for certification
  - Complete the mandatory orientation course
  - Pass a written examination
  - Complete 20 hours of additional education; 15 hours must be election-specific
  - Have a high school diploma or equivalent
- For maintaining certification, an assistant administrator must:
  - Serve as an assistant election administrator continuously during the year for which maintenance is required
  - Receive 6 hours of continuing education; 2 hours must be election-specific
- Each county is still required to have two fully certified election administrators.

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#### TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Training must be election-specific or job-related training approved by the Election Administration and Certification Board. The following organizations provide election related training:

- The Office of the Secretary of State
  - Workshops
  - Canvassing Board Training
- Washington State Association of County Auditors
  - Annual elections conference
  - Other conferences—presentations related to election administration
- Outside Organizations
  - Election Center
  - US Election Assistance Commission
  - Federal Voting Assistance Program
  - User group meetings
  - Visiting other counties (4 hrs for initial certification; 2 hrs for maintenance)

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- Any training approved by the Election Administration and Certification Board
  - Other approved training—see the list on the Secretary of State’s website

Visit the Election Administrators tab on our website for applications, applicable training hours and a Training Tracker form.

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## 1.1 ELECTION LAWS

### STATE CONSTITUTION

The State Constitution consists of 32 Articles. When referring to an article, you will see the Article followed by a Roman numeral. Example: Article VI

Articles are further divided into Sections. When referring to a specific section, you will see either:

- Article VI, Section 4, or
- Art. VI, Sec. 4, or
- Art. VI, § 4

Articles I, II, III, IV, VI, VII, XI, XIV, XXII, and XXIII all contain provisions related to elections.

### STATE STATUTES

The official name is the Revised Code of Washington, commonly known as “RCWs.”

- State statutes are organized into numbered Titles.

Example: RCW **29A**

- Titles are divided into Chapters and are listed after the title number, separated by a period.

Example: RCW 29A.**24**

- Chapters are divided into sections. The section number is listed after the chapter number, separated by a period.

Example: RCW 29A.24.**031**

Most election laws are found in Title 29A, however many are found in chapters associated with specific offices and issues. (See the chart found at the end of this chapter.)

### STATE RULES

The official name is Washington Administrative Code, commonly known as “WACs.” WACs are organized in a manner similar to RCWs.

- Titles are divided into Chapters and are listed after the title number, separated by a dash. For example: WAC 434-**250**

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- Chapters are divided into sections. The section number is listed after the chapter number, separated by a dash. For example: Washington Administrative Code Title 434, Chapter 250, Section 030 would read as WAC 434-250-**030**.

Rules for the Secretary of State are found in Title 434. WAC chapters 434-208 through 434-381 are related to Elections.

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### FEDERAL ELECTION LAWS

There are several federal election laws affecting the administration of elections. Some of the most used are:

- MOVE Act—Military and Overseas Voter Empowerment Act of 2009
- HAVA – Help America Vote Act of 2002
- NVRA – National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter)
- UOCAVA – Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act of 1986
- Voting Rights Act of 1965

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### CASES AND AG OPINIONS

- Attorney General Opinions affect the way election laws are administered. Opinions are well respected guidance, but are not binding law. An opinion is requested when the interpretation of an existing law is in question.
- Supreme Court and Court of Appeals decisions are binding law, no matter what the current law says.
- State and federal courts also have cases that affect the administration of election law. However, these are usually not binding for the entire state, although they may be used to interpret state law.

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### SEARCH TOOLS

- The RCWs and WACs may be found on the Secretary of State's website at [http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/election\\_laws.aspx](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/elections/election_laws.aspx).
- The state also provides a search option for RCWs, WACs, and the State Constitution at <http://search.leg.wa.gov/>.
- A list of election related RCW's outside of Title 29A (on the following page) at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/assets/elections/RCW%20Chapters%20Outside%20Title%2029A-09.pdf>.

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## Election Related RCW Chapters

<b>Election-Related Topics</b>	
Vacancies in Office	42.12
Eligibility to Hold Office	42.04
Motor Voter	46.20
Mental Competency	11.88
Public Disclosure Commission	42.17
Redistricting	44.05
Legislative Districts	44.07D
<b>General Government</b>	
Public Records	42.56
Records Retention	40.14 & 36.22
Open Public Meetings Act	42.30
Legal Notices & Publications	65.16
Debt Limits for Taxing Districts	39.36
General Obligation Bonds	39.40 & 39.46
Excess Property Tax Levies	84.52
Property Tax Limitations	84.55
Property Tax Exemptions	84.36
Taxing District Boundaries	84.09
<b>Judicial Offices</b>	
Supreme Court	2.04
Court of Appeals	2.06
Superior Court	2.08
District Court	3.34 & 3.38
Municipal Court	3.46 & 3.50
Municipal Court > 400,000	35.20
<b>State Offices</b>	
Governor	43.06
Lieutenant Governor	43.15
Secretary of State	43.07
State Treasurer	43.08
State Auditor	43.09
Attorney General	43.10
Commissioner of Public Lands	43.12
Superintendent of Public Instruction	28A.300
<b>Local Government</b>	
Counties	36.16, 36.22, 36.32 & 36.89

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## 1. 2 ELECTION ADMINISTRATION TOOL KIT

### TOOLS

Every election administrator should assemble a 'toolkit' consisting of items that will help keep the office running smoothly. These are the items that will help you in completing day-to-day tasks. A toolkit might include:

- Local government retention schedules
- Written office policies and procedures
- Election calendar and task specific schedules
- Contact information for vendors, other counties, and OSOS staff
- Web links for election departments and political organizations
- Operation manuals for equipment and software
- Guidelines for implementing the *Americans with Disabilities Act*

### WHO IS THE PUBLIC DISCLOSURE COMMISSION?

RCW 42.17

The Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) monitors state and local candidate campaign financing, including compliance with state law for monies collected, expended and all political advertising. Candidates running for US Congress or for President/Vice President report directly to the Federal Election Commission.

Election administrators are obligated to notify the PDC of the following information:

- Names of all candidates filing with the Auditor
- The name of any person withdrawing from candidacy
- The names of incumbents and the number of registered voters in each jurisdiction based on the last general election must be reported each January
- Filings for cemetery districts and districts where voters must have special qualifications such as ownership of land are exempt.

If your county uses the Washington Election Information (WEI) to file candidates, the system automatically notifies the PDC of candidate filings and withdrawals.

Candidates must report to the PDC, either in writing or electronically, according to an established schedule. Copies of PDC reports submitted to the County Auditor must be retained according to the Local Government Retention Schedule.

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PDC contact information: [www.web.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.web.pdc.wa.gov) or (360) 753-1111.

## PUBLIC INFORMATION AND RECORD REQUESTS

RCW 42.56

Any information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or propriety function is considered public record unless specifically exempted by law.

Information may consist of a number of formats including letters or memos, films, videos, photographs, audio recordings, symbols, discs, and emails.

All documents and records must be retained for a specified length of time as determined by the Local Government Records Committee.

Counties use two schedules:

- Common Records Retention Schedule (CORE) and Local Government General Records Retention Schedule (LGGRRS)
- Records management assistance, current schedules, and information may be found at [http://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/RecordsManagement/records\\_local.aspx](http://www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/RecordsManagement/records_local.aspx)

If a document type does not have a prescribed retention period, it must be held indefinitely.

### THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

- Any member of the public may request a document
- Records must be available during normal business hours
- The requester is not required to state why the documents are requested
- The law restricts the use of public lists for commercial purposes. However, there is no provision for denying the release of the information
- An agency must provide the fullest assistance to the requestor
- If a record exists, it must be provided unless it has been specifically exempted by state law. This includes records held beyond the retention period
- Fulfill the request in as short a period of time as possible

Do not charge a fee for viewing or searching for documents. You can charge the actual cost for copying documents up to 15 cents per page or for scanning paper documents into electronic format provided all conditions of [WAC 44-14-07003](#) are met.

### What should you do when you receive a public information or record request?

Respond no later than five business days to the request by doing one of the following actions:

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- Provide the record
- Notify the requester with an estimate of when the document(s) will be provided
- Seek clarification of the request
- Deny the request with an explanation why you cannot or will not comply

### Are there any exempt records?

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There are records that are exempt from public disclosure such as:

- Personnel files that are closed
- Ongoing investigations by law enforcement agencies
- Preliminary drafts or notes expressing opinions or formulating policies

If you are denying a request, create an exemption log that identifies the record by date, author, title, and exemption statute and reason.

A denial may lead to a lawsuit, so keep good records.

### ADDRESS CONFIDENTIALITY PROGRAM VOTERS

RCW 40.24 & WAC 434-840

Closed personnel files include participants in the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP). ACP participants are “phantom” voters protected under Chapter 40.24 RCW. Registration and balloting information is strictly confidential and their information cannot be included in your electronic voter registration files. Only the personnel in your office designated should process registration and ballots.

### OFFICE PROCEDURES


Written procedures ensure consistency in completing a task, providing a timeline for processes, and giving direction to new employees or for infrequent activities. Procedures also document compliance with state laws and office policy. The example of written procedures includes:

- Title with initials of author and date of last review
- Brief statement of the purpose for the procedure
- List of controlling statutes, rules, or policies
- List of forms used in the procedure
- List of records created during the process
- Step by step instructions necessary to complete the procedure:
  - times and deadlines

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- actions to take in special circumstances, e.g. lack of compliance or an emergency
- person responsible for the completion of each task or procedure

### EXAMPLE OF WRITTEN PROCEDURE FORM


**Snohomish County  
Elections/Voting Division Procedure**

Title Ballot Packing for Storage	Document No. and Revision TB – 002
Written and Last Updated by and Date: D.F. 4/21/2008	Effective Date: 6/30/2008
Approved by and Date: WM 6/30/2008	

**Purpose**

To maintain and track how and where tabulated ballots are packed for storage after tabulation.

**References**

<b>RCW 29A.60.110</b>	Ballot containers, sealing, opening
<b>WAC 434-261-045</b>	Secure Storage

**Forms**

	Batch slips
	Storage box label

**Records**

<b>Ballot storage location.xls</b>	Batch locations are recorded in each election's ballot location spreadsheet
<b>Batch Accountability Sheet</b>	Tabulation accountability paperwork completed by machine operator for each batch of ballots

**Procedure**

1.0 Pre-Election storage inventory

<b><u>Action By</u></b>	<b><u>Action</u></b>
Election Technician	1) Review supply check sheet and order any needed supplies at least 4 weeks before election

2.0 Pre-tabulation packing preparation (prior to Election Day tabulation)

Someone who has never performed the tasks should test all procedures. Adopt procedures only after testing.

Review and update office procedures annually.

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## ELECTION RESOURCES

No office works independently. With the advent of technology, the public expects offices to know more and find information faster. Prepare in advance with:

- Schedules and calendars – specific to elections and election processes
- Equipment manuals from your vendors (preferably electronic format)
- Website favorites – such as
  - OSOS including Elections & Archives/Records Management
  - PDC
  - Local government sites e.g. cities, ports, schools
  - US Post Office
  - VRDB access
  - Lexus Nexus and DOL lookup (requires a license)
  - WEI Online Help Manual

## WEI - WASHINGTON ELECTION INFORMATION SYSTEM

WEI, a multi-support system, originally designed to provide free web support for counties evolved to include:

- Increased access to election results
- Online voter registration
- Individual voter information

Counties have the option to use as little, or as much, of the WEI as desired. Some of the services now available to counties include:

- Standardized voter education notices
- Candidate filing management
- MyBallot
- Online voter guides
- Archived election information

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## ELECTION AND VOTER REGISTRATION COSTS

Elections cost money. Participating minor taxing jurisdictions are responsible for their share of election costs. The state reimburses for its share in odd year elections only. Some examples of recoverable expenditures are:

- Printing costs for ballots and envelopes
- Mailing ballots and charges for undeliverable ballots
- Staff time dedicated to the election
- Annual maintenance for the election management software

Examples of costs not charged to the election:

- The election management software maintenance costs used for voter registration
- Printing or postage for required NVRA notices
- Expenses covered by HAVA grants

If expenses are not related to elections, they are normally related to voter registration. A portion of the cost of voter registration is shared with the cities and towns.

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## TRACKING EXPENSES

There are several methods for tracking expenditures:

- Using budget line items attached to warrants
- Retaining copies of all invoices
- Maintaining an itemized spreadsheet during the election

Any combination of these methods has proven successful for accurately documenting expenses. Track registration expenses separately from election costs.

Billing information and rules for cost recovery are available in the BARS Manual (*Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System*) (Vol. 1, Pt. 3, Ch 12) available on the [Office of Financial Management's website](http://www.sao.wa.gov/en/clientsupport/financialreporting/lgs/barsmanuals/Pages/default.aspx) at <http://www.sao.wa.gov/en/clientsupport/financialreporting/lgs/barsmanuals/Pages/default.aspx>.

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## WEB RESOURCES

**Office of the Secretary of State:** [www.sos.wa.gov](http://www.sos.wa.gov)

**OSOS Elections home page:** [www.vote.wa.gov](http://www.vote.wa.gov).

**OSOS Election Administrators webpage tab:** [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/administrators](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/administrators)

**Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP):** [www.fvap.gov](http://www.fvap.gov)

**Public Disclosure Commission:** [www.web.pdc.wa.gov](http://www.web.pdc.wa.gov)

**US Postal Service:** [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com)

**Budgeting, Accounting and Reporting System (BARS):**  
[www.sao.wa.gov/en/clientsupport/financialreporting/lgs/barsmanuals](http://www.sao.wa.gov/en/clientsupport/financialreporting/lgs/barsmanuals)

## WEB RESOURCES FOR ELECTION LAWS

**Department of Justice:** [www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/nvra/activ\\_nvra](http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/voting/nvra/activ_nvra)

**NVRA and UOCAVA:** [www.fvap.gov/reference/index](http://www.fvap.gov/reference/index)

## OTHERS SUPER SITES

**Find a birthday:** [www.stevemorse.org/birthday/birthday2](http://www.stevemorse.org/birthday/birthday2)

**Free people search:** [www.zabasearch.com](http://www.zabasearch.com)

**Address Lookup:** [www.melissadata.com/lookups/addressverify](http://www.melissadata.com/lookups/addressverify) (No charge for the first five daily)

**ZIP locator:** [www.zip-codes.com](http://www.zip-codes.com)

**Lexis Nexis:** [www.lexis.com](http://www.lexis.com) (Requires licensed login)

**Department of Licensing query:** <https://secureaccess.wa.gov> (Requires licensed login)

**Social Security Death Index:** <http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>

## FORMS AND TEMPLATES

**Voter Registration Challenges:** [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voterregistrationchallenges.aspx](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/voterregistrationchallenges.aspx)

**Agency Based Registration Forms:** [www.sos.wa.gov/elections/abvr](http://www.sos.wa.gov/elections/abvr)

**My Vote:** <https://wei.secstate.wa.gov/olvrsite/Default.aspx>

**Voter Registration Form:** <https://wei.secstate.wa.gov/olvrsite/Default.aspx>

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### 1.3 DISABILITY AWARENESS

### WAC 434-250 & RCW 29A.40

#### HAVA (HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT)

#### HAVA TITLE 1

In 2002, the Federal government passed a law called the Help America Vote Act. This law, augmented by Washington State laws, requires election officials to provide voters with disabilities the same access to voting as to other citizens. Voters must be given an equal opportunity to vote privately and independently.

HAVA requires,

*“A State shall use the funds provided under a payment made under this section to carry out one or more of the following activities:*

*G) Improving the accessibility and quantity of polling places, including providing physical access for individuals with disabilities, providing nonvisual access for individuals with visual impairments, and providing assistance to Native Americans, Alaska Native citizens, and to individuals with limited proficiency in the English language.”*


#### HOW DO YOU MAKE VOTE BY MAIL ACCESSIBLE?

Every county must provide:

- Accessible Voting Units (AVU) in at least one voting center
- Election materials in alternate format, e.g. audio, larger fonts, etc.

Voting centers must meet all requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). AVUs must be wheelchair-accessible and protected from the view of other voters to maintain privacy.

The “Accessibility Assessment” found at the end of this section will assist you in determining the accessibility of any voting location.

 Deposit sites intended for deposits from a vehicle should be located at the driver’s side of a vehicle. Boxes intended for pedestrian use should be reachable from a wheel chair.

#### DISABILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

#### RCW 29A.04

All counties are required to establish an advisory committee. The committee must include persons of ‘diverse’ disabilities and persons with expertise in providing accommodations for persons with disabilities.

Counties may ‘share’ a committee provided only one of the participating counties exceeds a population of seventy thousand.

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### WHAT DOES THE COMMITTEE DO?

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Assist the County Auditor in developing a plan to identify and implement changes to improve the accessibility of elections for voters with disabilities including recommendations for:

- The number and locations of voting centers and ballot deposit sites and/or ballot drop box locations
- Outreach to voters regarding the availability of disability accommodation
- Transportation of voting devices to locations convenient to voters with disabilities
- Implementation of the Help America Vote Act
- Maintaining the plan on a yearly basis

### DISABILITY AWARENESS

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The video: “Hidden in Plain Sight” produced by the Montana Advocacy Program addresses communication with members of the disabled community. A list of informational resources is available at the end of this section.

### VOTER ASSISTANCE

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A voter has the right to request assistance from whomever the voter chooses. Staff members assist voters upon request or offer assistance when it appears that a voter is having difficulty casting his or her vote.

 *Maintain voter privacy - always ask the voter if assistance is needed prior to approaching.*

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## THE ARGUMENT FOR ACCESSIBILITY

*Article from: The Center for an Accessible Society, People with Disabilities and Voting*

What if you wanted to vote but the polling place was locked. For many of the 33.7 million Americans with disabilities of voting age, this situation is all too real. Not because polling officials are deliberately blocking disabled people from entering, but because so many polling places are inaccessible. In fact, the Federal Election Commission reports that, in violation of state and federal laws, more than 20,000 polling places across the nation are inaccessible, depriving people with disabilities of their fundamental right to vote.

This despite state and federal laws - including the Americans With Disabilities Act - which require polling places to accommodate disabled voters.

Polling booths are set in church basements or in upstairs meeting halls where there is no ramp or elevator. Or there is no disabled parking, or doorways are too narrow. All this means problems not just for people who use wheelchairs, but for people using canes or walkers too. And in most states people who are blind don't have the right to a Braille ballot; they have to bring someone along to vote for them, and might well wonder if that person is really following their instructions. It appears that a person requires sight to have the right to a secret ballot.

Studies show that people with disabilities are interested in government and public affairs and want to participate in the democratic process. But because they are often locked out of the polling booth they stay home on Election Day. A study by researchers Kay Schriener and Douglas Kruse shows that people with disabilities are 20 percentage points less likely than non-disabled people to vote and 10 percent less likely to register to vote.

Poll workers can sometimes deter people from voting when they question the right to vote of someone with a cognitive disability. Sometimes they believe that someone with cerebral palsy is drunk. And just as convicted felons are legally disenfranchised; many states have outmoded constitutions or statutes disenfranchising people with cognitive disabilities, using terms like "idiot" and "unsound mind." Would it matter if more people with disabilities voted. Of course, it's the fundamental right of all Americans to vote. But if people with disabilities voted at the same rate as the non-disabled, 10 million more votes would have been cast in the last Presidential election - a major voting bloc.

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## GUIDELINES &amp; SUGGESTIONS FOR INTERACTING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

**Be Respectful** – Treat people with disabilities with the same respect and consideration that you have for everyone else.

**Meeting Someone** – Avoid actions and words that suggest the person should be treated differently. People who use wheelchairs may have a variety of different disabilities. When you meet someone, extend your hand to shake if that is what you normally do. A person who cannot shake hands will let you know. If you are meeting a blind person, identify yourself. Use a normal tone of voice when extending a verbal welcome. Do not raise your voice unless requested.

**Helping** – Do not automatically give assistance; ask first if the person wants help. Don't be offended if someone refuses your offer of assistance or does not feel like discussing his/her disability. If the offer is accepted, listen to or accept instructions.

**Communication** – Talk directly to the person, not to an aide, friend or interpreter. When talking with a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, sit down and converse at the same level. Offer to make basic information available in large print, Braille, electronic or audio formats.

**Touching** – Do not pet guide dogs, and do not pat or touch a person with a disability unless there is a good reason (such as shaking hands in greeting or if the person has requested assistance). However, you may gently touch a deaf person to get his attention. Do not touch someone's cane, wheelchair or other device.

**Environments** – Provide wide & clear paths of travel for people who use wheelchairs or are blind. Be aware that some people may be sensitive to smoke, perfumes, or any other toxins that may be in the air.

**Service Animals** – A service animal is NOT required to have any special certification. The civil rights of persons with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in all public places is protected by Federal law. Never touch the Service Animal, or the person it assists, without permission. Do not make noises at the Service Animal; it may distract the animal from doing its job.

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**ETIQUETTE: RELATING TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

Remember that a person who has a disability is a person -- like anyone else.

Relax. If you don't know what to do or say, allow the person who has a disability to help put you at ease.

Do not assume anything. If you have a question about what to do, how to do it, what language or terminology to use, what assistance to offer, ask the person with the disability. That person should be your first and best resource.

Offer assistance, quietly and tactfully, if it seems needed, but don't overdo it or insist on it or make a scene. Respect the person's right to reject help or to indicate the kind of help needed.

If, for whatever reason, you cannot assist in the way that is asked, be open in discussing this with the person with the disability. You have a right to set limits on what you can and cannot do. Your relationship with a person with a disability should be, like any other relationship, a reciprocal one.

If there is time and opportunity, explore your mutual interests in a friendly way. The person probably has many interests besides those connected with the disability and the job.

Talk about the disability if it comes up naturally, without prying. Be guided by the wishes of the person with the disability.

Appreciate what the person can do. Remember that difficulties the person may be facing may stem more from society's attitudes and barriers than from the disability itself.

Be considerate of the extra time it might take for a person with a disability to get things said or done. Let the person set the pace in walking or talking.

Speak directly to a person who has a disability. Don't consider a companion or interpreter to be a conversational go-between.

Don't move a wheelchair, crutches, or other mobility aids out of reach of a person who uses them.

Never start to push a wheelchair without first asking the occupant if you may do so.

Before deciding whether or not to push a wheelchair up or down a step, curb, or other obstruction, ask the person if and how he or she wants you to proceed; and be respectful of your own limitations.

Don't lean on a person's wheelchair when talking; it is an invasion of personal space. Don't pat a person in a wheelchair on the head; that is patronizing.

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Give whole, unhurried attention to the person who has difficulty speaking. Don't talk for the person, but give help when needed. Keep your manner encouraging rather than correcting. When necessary, ask questions that require short answers or a nod or shake of the head.

Don't pretend to understand a person with a speech difference when you do not. Don't be afraid to let the person know that you do not understand. Be patient, not only with the person with the disability but also with yourself.

Speak calmly, slowly, and distinctly to a person who has a hearing problem or other difficulty understanding. Stand in front of the person, speak directly to the person, and use natural gestures to aid communication. When full understanding is doubtful, try writing notes.

When dining with a person who has trouble cutting meat or buttering rolls, offer to help. Explain to a person who has a visual problem where dishes, utensils, and condiments are located on the table.

Do not pet or otherwise distract dog guides; they are working and must not be distracted.

Be alert to possible existence of architectural barriers in places you may want to enter with a person who has a disability. Watch for inadequate lighting, which inhibits communication by persons who have hearing problems.

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## PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR TRAINING AND EVENT ACCESSIBILITY

### IS THIS LOCATION/EVENT ACCESSIBLE?

*In order to be truly accessible, all questions should be answered with “yes.” If any answer is negative, or needs qualification, then a new location or accommodations need to be made.*

*A detailed checklist for polling places, voting centers and public access is available from the US Department of Justice website at <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/votingck.htm>*

### PARKING

- ☐ The required number of parking spaces are designated as accessible with signs using the access logo. (See the checklist referenced above to determine requirements.)
- ☐ One out of every six accessible parking spaces is designed with an access isle for van parking.
- ☐ The accessible parking is located as close as possible to the entrance.
- ☐ If accessible parking is not visible from the street, directional signs with the access logo are pointing the way.
- ☐ Voters can be dropped off at a curb cut providing adequate and direct access to the building.

### PATHWAYS

- ☐ Paths are no less than 48 inches wide.
- ☐ The slope of the path is no more than one inch of rise for every 20 inches of run.
- ☐ There is at least 80 inches of clearance over the pathway at all points.
- ☐ All thresholds are no more than one-half inch for interior or three-quarters of an inch for exterior doors.
- ☐ Carpets are no thicker than one-half inch.
- ☐ If there are gratings in the walking surface, the grating is no more than one-half inch in width.
- ☐ Directional signs are visible along the accessible route and at the entrance.
- ☐ All doorways are at least 32 inches wide.

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- ☐ If the location requires change in elevation in the building an elevator access is in close proximity to the entrance and the training room.
- ☐ All stairs are supplemented with ramps of no more than a 1-foot rise for every 20 feet of run.

#### BUILDING/TRAINING ROOM

- ☐ Doors to building and rooms are designed with lever handles, automatic openers and room to move to the side.
- ☐ Drinking fountains, telephones and other convenience facilities are designed for wheelchair users or those with mobility issues.
- ☐ The restrooms are designed with wide stalls, grab bars and in close proximity to meeting room.
- ☐ The room arrangement is such that all persons will be able to participate visually and physically.
- ☐ The room can accommodate additional space requirements by those with mobility issues.
- ☐ If computers are to be used, computer stations are designed to accommodate wheelchairs.

#### MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ☐ Accommodations such as interpreters, handouts and presentation copies are available in alternate formats.
- ☐ There is a statement regarding availability of accommodations in all publicity for meeting.
- ☐ There is a statement that alternate formats are available upon request.
- ☐ Videos/films have closed captions.
- ☐ A contact person has been identified for accommodation issues.

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**WEB LINKS TO DISABILITY INFORMATION**

**Dept. of Justice Civil Rights Division/Voting:** <http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/vot/>

**Help America Vote Act (HAVA):** [http://www.fec.gov/hava/law\\_ext.txt](http://www.fec.gov/hava/law_ext.txt)

**Disability Considerations in HAVA:** <http://www.nls.org/conf2004/hava.htm>

**FEC Federal Election Commission:** <http://www.fec.gov/>

**Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA):** <http://www.ada.gov/>

**ADA Polling Place Checklist:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/votingck.htm>

**ADA Best Practices Tool Kit:** <http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/pcatoolkit/chap1toolkit.htm>

**Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act:**

<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/cguide.htm#anchor64292>

**WA Department of Health:** <http://www.doh.wa.gov/>

**WA State Human Rights Commission:** <http://www.hum.wa.gov/>

**Disability.gov:** <https://www.disability.gov/>

**National Disability Rights Network with Montana Advocacy Program's video "Hidden in Plain Sight":**

<http://www.napas.org/en/issues/voting/358-disability-voting-resources.html>

**Disability Rights Washington:** <http://www.disabilityrightswa.org/>

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